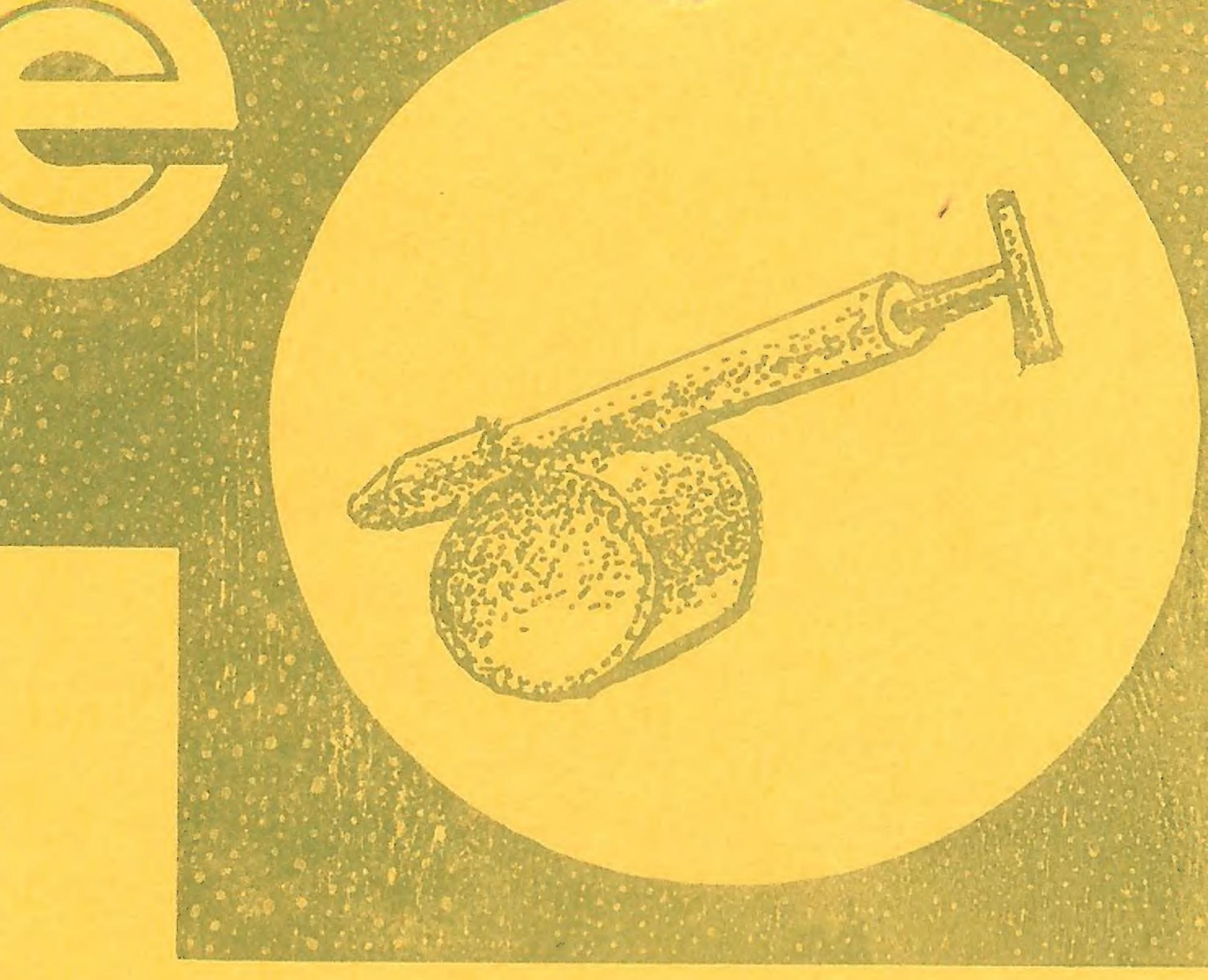
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for the home gardener

Number 15
Insecticides Around the Home



The control of insect pests around the home has increased in importance in recent years with the upsurge in home landscaping and vegetable gardening. When searching for a cost effective and ecologically safe insecticide homeowners are faced with a bewildering array of products for controlling insect pests.

Effective and safe insect control depends on three factors: correct identification of pest, selection of proper control methods, and careful attention to all instructions and safety precautions on pesticide labels.

Correct identification of all but the most common insect pests requires a basic understanding of insect body structure, life stages, and characteristic damage to host plants. Unfamiliar insect pests can be identified using non-technical descriptions found in horticulture and gardening books. The Farm Advisor, Agricultural Commissioner, or the Department of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens can aid you for proper identification of insects.

METHODS OF CONTROL

CULTURAL CONTROL methods reduce pest damage through careful plant selection, rotation of crops to avoid pest buildup, and maintaining plant health and vigor by good gardening practices. Nurseries and garden centers offer a wide variety of landscaping trees, shrubs, and groundcovers which are remarkably pest free in Southern California. Sanitary procedures in the garden, such as weed removal, garden cultivation, and removal of plant debris for composting or disposal can reduce pest damage substantially.

MECHANICAL CONTROLS involve the physical removal of pests, or barriers which reduce insect movement or damage. Hand picking of large caterpillars such as Tomato Hornworm can be effective for small areas. A forceful spray of water is effective in removing and drowning many insects, particularly aphids. A glue-like product applied in a band around woody stems is useful in stopping the movement of ants and associated aphids and scale insects.

BIOLOGICAL CONTROL methods offer a safe, effective, and long term approach to keeping insect pests under control. Natural insect predators, parasites, and diseases obtain highly specific results -- that is, the target pest is controlled without injury to beneficial insects or wildlife. Mass rearing of lady beetles and praying mantis has made these insect predators available to the homeowner. Another effective, though short lived, biological control is a product containing dried spores of Bacillus thuringinensis. Mixed with water and applied to foliage this bacteria causes certain types of chewing caterpillars and worms to stop feeding and die.

CHEMICAL CONTROL measures are best used as a last resort when other methods prove ineffective. There are disadvantages to the use of pesticides. These include possible injury to beneficial insects, health hazards to user, and accumulation of persistant insecticides in the environment. Such potential hazards require informed and cautious use of chemical insecticides.

(Over)

Listed below are 8 insecticides recommended for control of garden and house pests. After each pest are listed the numbers of insecticides that will give effective control. Insecticides are listed in order of increasing toxicity to warm blooded animals. The use of brand names is for convenience only and constitutes no endorsement. Chemical names are listed within parentheses, and may be found on insecticide labels under "active ingredients".

- 1. Dipel, Thuricide (Baci-lus thuringiensis)
- 2. Petroleum oils
- 3. Malathion
- 4. Kelthane (dicofol)
- 5. Sevin (carbaryl)
- 6. Metaldehyde
- 7. Diazinon
- 8. Meta-systox R (demeton)

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Ants		Mealybugs	2,3,7,8
Aphids	3	Mosquitos	3,5
Beetles	3,5,7	Oak Moths	3,5
Borers	5,7	Scale	2,3,5,7,8
Cabbage Worm	1,3,5	Slugs	6
Caterpillars	1,5,7	Snails	6
Codling Moths	5,7	Sowbugs	3,5,7
Cutworms	5,7	Soil Mealybugs	8
Diabrotica	3,5,7	Spider Mites	2,4,8
Earwigs	3,5,7	Spittle Bugs	2,5,7,8
Flies	7	Termites	Consult Exterminator
Grasshoppers	3,5,7	Thrips	3, 5, 7, 8
Grubs	5,7	Weevils	3,5,7
Lawn Moths	5,7	Whiteflies	3, 5, 7, 8
Leaf Hoppers	3,5,7,8	Wireworms	7
Leaf Miners	3,7,8		

SAFETY

Before opening any insecticide read all label directions and safety precautions and follow them carefully for safe and effective pest control. Signal words on the label provide guidelines to determine the chemical's toxicity to humans. "DANGER" or "POISON" with the skull and crossbones symbol means highly toxic. "WARNING" means moderately toxic and "CAUTION" indicates slightly toxic. All insecticides are a potential hazard to the user and should be stored and disposed of in accordance with label instructions.

Additional information can be obtained at:
Los Angeles State and County Arboretum - 446-8251
Descanso Gardens - 790-5571
South Coast Botanic Garden - 772-5813

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